

Title 32: PROFESSIONS AND OCCUPATIONS

**Chapter 69-C: MAINE WATER WELL COMMISSION HEADING:
PL 1991, c. 455, Pt. B, §1 (new); PL 2001, c. 209, Pt. B, §1 (rpr)**

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Maine Revised Statutes

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§4700-E. DEFINITIONS

As used in this chapter, unless the context otherwise indicates, the following terms have the following meanings. [1991, c. 455, Pt. B, §1 (NEW).]

1. Apprentice well driller. "Apprentice well driller" means a person who is engaged to work at and learn the trade of well drilling under the direct supervision of a master or journeyman well driller.

[1993, c. 25, §2 (AMD); 1993, c. 25, §15 (AFF) .]

1-A. Apprentice pump installer. "Apprentice pump installer" means a person who is engaged to work at and learn the trade of water well pump installation under the direct supervision of a master or journeyman pump installer. A person who is licensed under chapter 49 as a master plumber is not required to register with the commission as an apprentice pump installer.

[2001, c. 209, Pt. B, §2 (NEW) .]

2. Commission. "Commission" means the Maine Water Well Commission created under section 4700-G.

[2001, c. 209, Pt. B, §2 (AMD) .]

3. Department. "Department" means the Department of Health and Human Services.

[1991, c. 455, Pt. B, §1 (NEW); 2003, c. 689, Pt. B, §6 (REV) .]

3-A. Geotechnical driller.

[2001, c. 209, Pt. B, §2 (RP) .]

3-B. Journeyman pump installer. "Journeyman pump installer" means a person doing the work of pump installation, repair or replacement in water wells who is in the employment of a master pump installer. A person who is licensed under chapter 49 as a master plumber is not required to register with the commission as a journeyman pump installer.

[2001, c. 209, Pt. B, §2 (NEW) .]

3-C. Geothermal heat exchange well. "Geothermal heat exchange well" means a hole drilled, driven or bored into the earth for the purpose of using the heat exchange capacity of the earth for heating and cooling.

[2009, c. 153, §1 (NEW) .]

3-D. Geothermal heat exchange well driller. "Geothermal heat exchange well driller" means a person, firm or corporation engaged in the work of drilling, driving or boring geothermal heat exchange wells.

[2009, c. 153, §2 (NEW) .]

3-E. Geothermal heat exchange well pump installer. "Geothermal heat exchange well pump installer" means a person who is engaged to work at and learn the trade of geothermal heat exchange well pump installation.

[2009, c. 153, §3 (NEW) .]

4. Journeyman well driller. "Journeyman well driller" means a person doing the work of drilling, driving or boring wells who is in the employment of a master well driller.

[1993, c. 25, §4 (AMD); 1993, c. 25, §15 (AFF) .]

4-A. Master pump installer. "Master pump installer" means a person, firm or corporation engaged in the installation, replacement or repair of a pump in a water well. The licensure of a master pump installer under this chapter must specify the name of the person licensed. In the case of a firm, the person licensed as a master pump installer must be a member or employee of the firm. In the case of a corporation, the person licensed as a master pump installer must be an employee of the corporation or an officer of the corporation. A person who is licensed under chapter 49 as a master plumber is not required to register with the commission as a master pump installer.

[2001, c. 209, Pt. B, §2 (NEW) .]

5. Master well driller. "Master well driller" means a person, firm or corporation engaged in the business of drilling, driving or boring wells. The licensure of a master well driller under this chapter must specify the name of the person licensed. In the case of a firm, the person licensed as a master well driller must be a member or employee of the firm. In the case of a corporation, the person licensed as a master well driller must be an employee of the corporation or an officer of the corporation.

[2001, c. 209, Pt. B, §2 (AMD) .]

6. Pump or pump system. For purposes of a water well, "pump" or "pump system" means mechanical equipment or a device used to remove water from a well including all piping and wiring up to the existing equipment in the structure. For the purposes of a geothermal heat exchange well, "pump" or "pump system" means the mechanical equipment or device used to move fluid from the geothermal heat exchange well, including all piping and wiring, up to the existing equipment in the structure.

[2009, c. 153, §4 (AMD) .]

6-A. Pump installation company. "Pump installation company" means a person, firm, partnership or corporation that is engaged in the trade of water well pump installation, repair or replacement.

[2001, c. 209, Pt. B, §2 (NEW) .]

7. Pump installer. "Pump installer" means an apprentice pump installer, journeyman pump installer or master pump installer.

[2001, c. 209, Pt. B, §2 (AMD) .]

8. Well or water well. "Well" or "water well" means any hole drilled, driven or bored into the earth used to extract drinking water. The terms "well" and "water well" do not include:

A. Dug wells; [1993, c. 25, §4 (NEW); 1993, c. 25, §15 (AFF).]

B. Monitoring wells; [1993, c. 25, §4 (NEW); 1993, c. 25, §15 (AFF).]

C. Wells constructed exclusively for the relief of artesian pressure at hydroelectric projects; [1993, c. 25, §4 (NEW); 1993, c. 25, §15 (AFF).]

D. Wells constructed for temporary dewatering purposes; [1993, c. 25, §4 (NEW); 1993, c. 25, §15 (AFF).]

E. Wells constructed for the purposes of extracting oil, gas or brine; and [1993, c. 25, §4 (NEW); 1993, c. 25, §15 (AFF).]

F. Wells on private property for private use that are constructed by the property owner or lessee of the property. [1993, c. 25, §4 (NEW); 1993, c. 25, §15 (AFF).]

[1993, c. 25, §4 (AMD); 1993, c. 25, §15 (AFF) .]

9. Well driller. "Well driller" means an apprentice well driller, journeyman well driller or master well driller.

[1993, c. 25, §4 (AMD); 1993, c. 25, §15 (AFF) .]

10. Well drilling contractor.

[1993, c. 25, §15 (AFF); 1993, c. 25, §5 (RP) .]

11. Well drilling company. "Well drilling company" means a person, firm, partnership or corporation that owns or otherwise operates any mechanical equipment used to drill, drive or bore water wells or geothermal heat exchange wells.

[2009, c. 153, §5 (AMD) .]

SECTION HISTORY

1991, c. 455, §B1 (NEW). 1993, c. 25, §§2-5 (AMD). 1993, c. 25, §15 (AFF). 2001, c. 209, §B2 (AMD). 2003, c. 689, §B6 (REV). 2009, c. 153, §§1-5 (AMD).

§4700-F. EXCLUSIONS

1. Applicability. The provisions of this chapter apply to all water wells constructed in the State after January 1, 1994. The provisions of this chapter relating to geothermal heat exchange well construction, geothermal heat exchange well pump installation and licensing requirements for geothermal heat exchange well drillers and geothermal heat exchange well pump installers apply after final adoption of initial rules pursuant to section 4700-I, subsection 2-A.

A. [1993, c. 25, §6 (RP).]

B. [1993, c. 25, §6 (RP).]

C. [1993, c. 25, §6 (RP).]

D. [1993, c. 25, §6 (RP).]

[2009, c. 153, §6 (AMD) .]

SECTION HISTORY

1991, c. 455, §B1 (NEW). 1993, c. 25, §6 (AMD). 2009, c. 153, §6 (AMD).

§4700-G. CREATION OF COMMISSION

1. Establishment of commission. The Maine Water Well Commission, as authorized by Title 5, chapter 379, is established to carry out the provisions of this chapter. The purpose of the commission is to provide the public with the highest quality drinking water possible by ensuring that water wells and geothermal heat exchange wells are drilled, constructed, altered or abandoned in a manner that protects groundwater from contamination.

[2009, c. 153, §7 (AMD) .]

2. Membership. The commission consists of the director of the division of environmental health within the Department of Health and Human Services or the director's designee; the Director of the Division of Geology, Natural Areas and Coastal Resources within the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry or the director's designee; the Commissioner of Transportation or the commissioner's designee; and 4 public members, 3 of whom must be well drillers.

[2013, c. 405, Pt. C, §15 (AMD) .]

3. Appointing authority. The Governor shall appoint the public members. Members who are well drillers must be appointed from among nominees selected by the Governor or the Maine Ground Water Association.

[2001, c. 209, Pt. B, §5 (AMD) .]

4. Chair. The commission shall appoint a member to serve as the commission's chair for a term of 2 years.

[1991, c. 455, Pt. B, §1 (NEW) .]

5. Terms of office. The term of the public members is 5 years. Terms must be staggered so that no more than 2 public member terms expire in any one year. Members who are not public members serve a term coincident with their term of office. The Governor shall fill any vacant seat on the commission by a qualified person for the remainder of the unexpired term. A member of the commission may be removed from office for cause by the Governor.

[2001, c. 209, Pt. B, §5 (AMD) .]

6. Administrative provision. The department shall administer the affairs and activities of the commission, keep all books and records, excluding data reports. All appropriations for use of the commission must be made to the department. The Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry, Division of Geology, Natural Areas and Coastal Resources shall keep all well data reports and work with the department in the administration of the commission's activities.

[2013, c. 405, Pt. C, §16 (AMD) .]

7. Records. The commission shall keep accurate records of its proceedings and shall maintain the following information:

- A. The names and addresses of all persons licensed under this chapter; and [2001, c. 209, Pt. B, §6 (AMD) .]
- B. An accounting of all money received or disbursed by the commission. [1991, c. 455, Pt. B, §1 (NEW) .]

All records and lists under this subsection are public documents, open for inspection during business hours.

[2001, c. 209, Pt. B, §6 (AMD) .]

8. Compensation. Public members of the commission receive the sum of \$50 per meeting plus any necessary traveling expenses for actual attendance at any commission meeting.

[1991, c. 455, Pt. B, §1 (NEW) .]

9. Meetings. The commission shall meet at least 2 times per calendar year at the call of the chair. The chair may call additional meetings as the chair determines necessary and shall call a meeting at the request of any 2 members of the commission.

[2013, c. 588, Pt. A, §41 (AMD) .]

SECTION HISTORY

1991, c. 455, §B1 (NEW). 1993, c. 25, §7 (AMD). 1995, c. 502, §E32 (AMD). 1999, c. 556, §§28, 29 (AMD). 2001, c. 209, §§B3-6 (AMD). 2003, c. 689, §B6 (REV). 2009, c. 153, §§7, 8 (AMD). 2011, c. 655, Pt. KK, §§19, 20 (AMD). 2011, c. 655, Pt. KK, §34 (AFF). 2013, c. 405, Pt. C, §§15, 16 (AMD). 2013, c. 588, Pt. A, §41 (AMD).

§4700-H. POWERS AND DUTIES

The commission has the following powers and duties. [1991, c. 455, Pt. B, §1 (NEW).]

1. Hold hearings. The commission shall conduct hearings in accordance with the Maine Administrative Procedure Act, Title 5, chapter 375.

[1991, c. 455, Pt. B, §1 (NEW) .]

1-A. Administer examinations. The commission shall develop and administer all examinations required by section 4700-I, subsection 4. All examinations must be written examinations and must test an applicant's knowledge of the following matters as is appropriate for the license or license endorsement for which the application is made:

- A. Principles of water well drilling; [2009, c. 153, §9 (NEW).]
- B. Principles of geothermal heat exchange well drilling; [2009, c. 153, §9 (NEW).]
- C. Abandonment of water wells; [2009, c. 153, §9 (NEW).]
- D. Abandonment of geothermal heat exchange wells; [2009, c. 153, §9 (NEW).]
- E. Installation of water well pump systems; [2009, c. 153, §9 (NEW).]
- F. Installation of geothermal heat exchange well pump systems; and [2009, c. 153, §9 (NEW).]
- G. The code of performance adopted by the commission. [2009, c. 153, §9 (NEW).]

[2009, c. 153, §9 (AMD) .]

2. Licensing. The commission shall license well drillers, geothermal heat exchange well drillers, well drilling companies, geothermal heat exchange well pump installers, pump installers and pump installation companies and may initiate action for the revocation or suspension of such licenses.

[2009, c. 153, §10 (AMD) .]

3. Investigate complaints. The commission shall investigate complaints and cases of noncompliance with, or violation of, this chapter or of the code of performance adopted by the commission. Complainants must petition the commission in writing within 24 months of completion of a water well or geothermal heat exchange well or the installation, repair or replacement of a pump system. At its discretion, the commission

may request that an investigation of an alleged violation be conducted by a neutral qualified individual, acceptable to both the alleged violator and the commission, who shall report to the commission. At its discretion, the commission may refer a complaint to the Attorney General.

[2009, c. 153, §11 (AMD) .]

4. Revocation and suspension of license. If the commission determines a violation of this chapter, the code of performance adopted by the commission or other laws and rules in effect, including for a well driller or a well drilling company the water well information laws under Title 12, section 550-B, has occurred, the commission shall notify the responsible well driller, geothermal heat exchange well driller, well drilling company, geothermal heat exchange well pump installer, pump installer or pump installation company by certified or registered mail of the violation. The commission may order the responsible party or parties to correct, within 48 hours of notification, any violation it determines to be a significant threat to public health, including, but not limited to, potential contamination by pathogenic organisms. The commission may order that all other violations be corrected within a period of 60 days following receipt of notification. If the violation is not corrected within 60 days, or within 48 hours for significant threats to public health, the commission may revoke or suspend the license of the responsible party or parties. A licensee who receives a written notice of a violation or of a revocation or suspension of a license under this subsection may request a hearing before the commission. The commission shall conduct such hearings and issue its decision within 30 days of the request. A decision of the commission under this subsection is a final agency action. The commission shall adopt rules governing criteria for license reinstatement. Rules adopted by the commission pursuant to this subsection are routine technical rules as defined in Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter 2-A.

[2009, c. 153, §12 (AMD) .]

5. Adopt code of performance. The commission shall adopt rules establishing a minimum code of performance for well drillers, pump installers, geothermal heat exchange well drillers and geothermal heat exchange well pump installers. The code of performance must set forth appropriate minimum standards of professional conduct for well drillers, pump installers, geothermal heat exchange well drillers and geothermal heat exchange well pump installers.

[2009, c. 153, §13 (AMD) .]

6. Levy fines. The commission may levy fines for violations of the code of performance adopted by the commission of not more than \$1,000 per violation.

[2009, c. 153, §14 (AMD) .]

7. Order well abandonment. The commission shall adopt rules establishing procedures for determining that a water well or geothermal heat exchange well must be abandoned because of prior contamination or because it has been constructed in violation of existing regulations and standards, can not be altered or repaired to meet existing regulations or standards and poses a significant threat to public health or groundwater contamination. Rules adopted by the commission pursuant to this subsection are routine technical rules as defined in Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter 2-A.

[2009, c. 153, §15 (AMD) .]

SECTION HISTORY

1991, c. 455, §B1 (NEW). 1993, c. 25, §§8,9 (AMD). 1993, c. 25, §15 (AFF). 2001, c. 209, §§B7-9 (AMD). 2009, c. 153, §§9-15 (AMD).

§4700-I. LICENSURE AND FEES

Effective January 1, 1994, a person may not participate in the physical construction of a water well for compensation or any public drinking water well unless licensed under this section. After final adoption of initial rules pursuant to subsection 2-A, a person may not participate in the physical construction of a geothermal heat exchange well for compensation unless licensed under this section. [2009, c. 153, §16 (AMD).]

1. Fees. The commission shall establish license fees sufficient to recover reasonable costs of administering this chapter, including costs associated with the development and administration of examinations. License fees are not required for apprentice well driller or apprentice pump installer licenses.

[2001, c. 209, Pt. B, §10 (AMD).]

2. Licensure. Except as provided in subsection 2-A, an applicant for licensure shall submit to the commission, on a form provided by the commission, a written application for licensure containing such information as the commission requires. A person who holds a valid license as provided for in this section must be in the charge of a licensed well drilling company or pump installation company in order to actively practice well drilling or pump installation, repair or replacement. A company license is valid only while the company employs at least one licensed master well driller for a well drilling company or one master pump installer for a pump installation company. The commission shall license an applicant for well driller licensure as either a master well driller or a journeyman well driller and applicants for pump installer licensure as either a master pump installer or a journeyman pump installer, based on the following criteria.

A. A master well driller must have a minimum of 3 years experience in well drilling and have worked an average of 1,000 hours per year as a journeyman well driller for each of those years. [1993, c. 25, §10 (AMD); 1993, c. 25, §15 (AFF).]

B. A journeyman well driller must have at least one year experience in well drilling and have worked at least 1,000 hours during that year as an apprentice well driller. [1993, c. 25, §10 (AMD); 1993, c. 25, §15 (AFF).]

C. A master pump installer must have a minimum of 3 years experience as a pump installer and have worked at least 350 hours as a pump installer during each of those years. [2001, c. 209, Pt. B, §10 (AMD).]

D. [1993, c. 25, §15 (AFF); 1993, c. 25, §10 (RP).]

E. A journeyman pump installer must have at least one year experience in pump installing and have worked at least 350 hours during that year as an apprentice pump installer. [2001, c. 209, Pt. B, §10 (NEW).]

F. A well drilling company must be issued a license upon presentation to the commission of a valid master well driller license issued to and held by the owner or an employee of the firm, partnership or corporation. [2001, c. 209, Pt. B, §10 (NEW).]

G. A pump installation company must be issued a license upon presentation to the commission of a valid master pump installer license issued to and held by the owner or an employee of the firm, partnership or corporation. [2001, c. 209, Pt. B, §10 (NEW).]

The commission shall license a well driller or pump installer applicant who is not eligible for licensure under paragraphs A to E as an apprentice.

[2009, c. 153, §17 (AMD).]

2-A. Geothermal heat exchange well drillers and geothermal heat exchange well pump installers; licensure. The commission shall adopt rules establishing a licensing structure for geothermal heat exchange well drillers and geothermal heat exchange well pump installers. The rules may allow licensure by endorsement. After adoption of the initial rules, rules adopted pursuant to this subsection are routine technical

rules pursuant to Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter 2-A. The initial rules must be adopted through major substantive rulemaking as defined in Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter 2-A. The commission shall consult with appropriate departments and agencies, including the Department of Environmental Protection, during the rule-making process.

[2009, c. 153, §18 (NEW) .]

3. Term of license. Well drillers, geothermal heat exchange well drillers, geothermal heat exchange well pump installers and pump installers must be licensed annually. All licenses expire on December 31st of each year. Any person who is a well driller or pump installer on the effective date of this Act is deemed to be licensed.

[2009, c. 153, §19 (AMD) .]

4. Examinations. After January 1, 1994, a person must successfully complete a written examination administered by the commission in order to:

A. Initially be licensed as a journeyman or master pump installer or as a journeyman or master well driller; [2001, c. 209, Pt. B, §10 (AMD).]

B. Upgrade from an apprentice to a journeyman well driller or an apprentice to a journeyman pump installer; and [2001, c. 209, Pt. B, §10 (AMD).]

C. Upgrade from a journeyman to a master well driller or a journeyman to a master pump installer. [2001, c. 209, Pt. B, §10 (AMD).]

A person licensed under chapter 49 as a master plumber is not required to complete an examination to perform the work of a pump installer.

[2001, c. 209, Pt. B, §10 (AMD) .]

4-A. Examinations for geothermal heat exchange well drillers and geothermal heat exchange well pump installers. After final adoption of initial rules pursuant to subsection 2-A, the commission may require a person to successfully complete a written examination administered by the commission in order to be licensed as a geothermal heat exchange well driller or a geothermal heat exchange well pump installer.

[2009, c. 153, §20 (NEW) .]

5. Waiver. Notwithstanding this section, in cases in which the commission finds the presence of exigent circumstances, the commission may grant a waiver of the requirements of this section and may authorize:

A. A person who has 5 years or more of well drilling experience of at least 1,000 hours in each of those 5 years under the supervision of a master well driller to sit for the master well driller examination under subsection 4 and to be licensed as a master well driller; and [2007, c. 207, §1 (NEW).]

B. A person who has 5 years or more of pump installation experience of at least 350 hours in each of those 5 years under the supervision of a master pump installer to sit for the master pump installer examination under subsection 4 and to be licensed as a master pump installer. [2007, c. 207, §1 (NEW).]

[2007, c. 207, §1 (NEW) .]

SECTION HISTORY

1991, c. 455, §B1 (NEW). 1993, c. 25, §§10,11 (AMD). 1993, c. 25, §15 (AFF). 2001, c. 209, §B10 (AMD). 2007, c. 207, §1 (AMD). 2009, c. 153, §§16-20 (AMD).

§4700-J. LICENSURE; WELL DRILLERS AND PUMP INSTALLERS

Effective January 1, 1994, a person may not engage in the business of constructing water wells within the State or engage in the installation, replacement or repair of a pump in a water well unless licensed with the commission. After final adoption of initial rules pursuant to section 4700-I, subsection 2-A, a person may not engage in the business of constructing geothermal heat exchange wells or engage in the installation, replacement or repair of a pump in a geothermal heat exchange well unless licensed with the commission. An applicant for licensure must complete an application form supplied by the commission, successfully complete any examination required by this chapter and pay an annual license fee established by the commission. The person so licensed shall display on each side of the drilling rig or the pump installer vehicle a seal issued by the commission indicating that person's license number and the current year of licensure. A person licensed under chapter 49 as a master plumber is not required to be licensed with the commission to perform the work of a pump installer. [2009, c. 652, Pt. A, §45 (AMD).]

1. Contractor.

[1993, c. 25, §12 (RP) .]

SECTION HISTORY

1991, c. 455, §B1 (NEW). 1993, c. 25, §12 (RPR). 2001, c. 209, §B11 (AMD). 2009, c. 153, §21 (AMD). 2009, c. 652, Pt. A, §45 (AMD).

§4700-K. COMPLIANCE WITH OTHER LAWS AND RULES

Notwithstanding this chapter, all water wells and geothermal heat exchange wells must be constructed and maintained in accordance with all other laws and rules in effect, including for water wells the water well information laws, Title 12, section 550-B. [2009, c. 153, §22 (AMD) .]

SECTION HISTORY

1991, c. 455, §B1 (NEW). 2009, c. 153, §22 (AMD).

§4700-L. PENALTIES

1. Fine. Any person, company, firm, partnership or corporation who installs, alters, repairs or replaces a water well, geothermal heat exchange well or pump system without being licensed as provided in this chapter or in violation of the code of performance adopted by the commission pursuant to section 4700-A, subsection 5, except for an apprentice well driller or an apprentice pump installer as set forth in this chapter, or any person, firm, partnership or corporation who procures a license as provided in this chapter wrongfully or by fraud commits a civil violation punishable by a fine of not more than \$1,000.

[2009, c. 153, §23 (AMD) .]

2. Injunction. The State may bring action in Superior Court to enjoin any person, firm, partnership or corporation from violating this chapter, regardless of whether proceedings have been or may be instituted in the District Court or whether civil proceedings have been or may be instituted.

[2001, c. 209, Pt. B, §12 (NEW) .]

3. Exclusion. This chapter does not prevent a person from making water well, geothermal heat exchange well or pump system installations, alterations, repairs or replacements in a single-family residence occupied by that person or to be occupied by that person as a bona fide personal abode as long as the installation, alteration, repair or replacement conforms to the standards set forth in this chapter and any rules adopted by the commission or the department.

[2009, c. 153, §24 (AMD) .]

SECTION HISTORY

1991, c. 455, §B1 (NEW). 2001, c. 209, §B12 (RPR). 2009, c. 153, §§23, 24 (AMD).

§4700-M. RECIPROCITY

The commission may issue a license without examination, in a comparable classification, to any person who holds a registration or license in any state, territory or possession of the United States or any country, if the commission determines that the requirements for registration or licensure of well drillers, geothermal heat exchange well drillers, geothermal heat exchange well pump installers or pump installers under which the person's registration or license was issued do not conflict with this chapter or the code of performance adopted by the commission under this chapter. [2009, c. 153, §25 (AMD) .]

SECTION HISTORY

1993, c. 25, §13 (NEW). 2001, c. 209, §B13 (AMD). 2009, c. 153, §25 (AMD) .

§4700-N. WELL INFORMATION

The commission shall adopt rules directing that, upon constructing, enlarging or deepening a drinking water well, the well contractor who constructed, enlarged or deepened the well shall record information in a permanent manner, including, but not limited to, the name of the contractor, the date the well was constructed, enlarged or deepened, the depth of the well and the well yield rate in gallons per minute. The rules must direct that the required information be maintained in the event that another contractor performs additional work on the well or a pump system that causes the original record of information to be altered or removed. Rules adopted pursuant to this section are routine technical rules as defined in Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter 2-A. [2003, c. 126, §1 (NEW) .]

SECTION HISTORY

2003, c. 126, §1 (NEW) .

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